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ABSTRACT

A study evaluated procedures currently used to market adult education at five colleges in Great Britain. Data were collected from roundtable discussions with the principals and vice-principals of the five participating colleges and from interviews and questionnaires administered to staff members from each college and to representatives of businesses or industries located in the same cities as the colleges. The necessity for marketing adult education was generally accepted, and basic marketing concepts appeared to be widely understood by those surveyed. Although at least some marketing was going on in all of the schools, the mechanisms, skills, and resources backing up the marketing efforts were patchy. Current marketing efforts were found to lack an overall marketing strategy or policy and failed to coordinate their efforts sufficiently. Colleges wishing to enhance their marketing of adult education should establish and maintain full student and industry databases, identify and take steps to meet the needs of local industry, reexamine the role of advisory committees, target their marketing efforts, and develop a corporate identity. (Appendixes to this report include selected reactions of representatives of the five colleges to the study findings, the names and titles of the persons in the study sample, and the study questionnaires.) (MN)

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MARKETING FE

A feasibility study

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Dear Sir/Madam

MARKETING FE: A FEASIBILITY STUDY

Attached is a report, commissioned by FEU from HR & H Marketing Research International Limited*, which had as its main objective to establish the extent to which an external marketing researcher (at modest cost) could advise and support FE colleges in their marketing.

It was in effect a feasibility study. Five colleges participated and between them they represented a range of environments. A summary of the marketing researcher's findings is given in Section V. It shows that some marketing is going on in all colleges, but the mechanisms, skills and resources backing up the marketing are patchy. Attitudes are positive, but the infrastructure is weak. A college rather than a departmental marketing image is suggested by the authors and generally it is recognised that more staff training, time and other resources need to be put into this area (a similar finding to that of the District Auditors).

Section VI gives some recommendations for action; and many college managers and LEA advisers should find this a useful check-list.

The management of the participating colleges have, in general, responded positively to the report and their reactions are given in Appendix A. At the time of writing, we are analysing different ways in which this report can be presented to the colleges and LEAs.

A less obvious objective was to assess the extent to which an external consultant (with no previous knowledge of the FE system) could usefully relate, in two to three months, to this particular problem in FE. In education generally, we tend to regard our problems as unique, complex and non-understandable by outsiders. Readers of this report will no doubt reflect on this aspect.

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In the meantime, we are hoping to employ HR & H to demonstrate further what they can do (for a modest cost) to follow up their report in a college and in an LEA context.

The FEU has sponsored other projects in marketing, including the production of a software data base to assess local training needs. For more information, please contact either Peter Davies or Diane Billam at the FEU.

Yours faithfully,

Jack Mansell

JACK MANSELL
Chief Officer

* Since the project was commissioned, HR & H has become the first market research company to win the Queen's Award for Export Achievement.

CONTENTS

		Page
I	BACKGROUND	1
II	RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	2
III	METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE	3
IV	THE ANALYSIS	6
V	SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS	7
VI	RECOMMENDATIONS	12
VII	COMMENTARY	19
A	THE COLLEGE PERSPECTIVE	20
1	Definitions of marketing	20
2	Current marketing activities	22
3	Contact with industry	26
4	Advisory Committees	29
5	Other information sources for course development	31
6	Monitoring student performance	35
7	Methods of communication	39
8	Promotional and publicity targets	42
9	The future role of marketing	45
B	THE INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE	47
1	Education and Training requirements and in-house provision	48
2	Extent and nature of external training provision	52
3	Perceived benefits of college courses	54
4	Obstacles to external training	57
5	Participation in YTS	60
6	Contact and communication with colleges	61
7	Methods of communication	65
8	Advisory Committees	66
9	Improvements	68
10	Training Organisations	70
VIII	APPENDIX A Colleges' Reactions	73
IX	APPENDIX B Sample Details Questionnaires	83

I BACKGROUND

The Further Education Unit (FEU) is an advisory, intelligence and development body for the Further Education service. Currently the service is under some criticism for being insufficiently market-oriented. The recent Government White Paper "Training for Jobs" (January 1984) for example states that a "market-oriented approach to training... is now required".

The White Paper makes policy recommendations for developments to the Youth Training Scheme (YTS), to Training in Occupational Skills, to Adult Training, and recommends new arrangements for Vocational Education. The Manpower Services Commission "has a central part to play" in the national effort in the training for jobs. Non-advanced further education is required to become increasingly responsive to changing training and educational requirements.

The FEU has indicated its wish to make a constructive contribution in assisting the FE system to cope with the demands which will arise from the implementation of more market-oriented policies.

The FEU has commissioned HR&H Marketing Research International Limited to conduct a feasibility study. This feasibility study, which complements various other FEU projects, is the subject of this report.

II RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the feasibility study is:

> "to establish the extent to which the services of professional market researchers, at modest cost, can advise colleges of Further Education on how they can improve the marketing of themselves and their services" (FEU, 7 Sept 1984)

It has been suggested that the lack of efficient mechanisms for identifying market need is a key deficiency of FE, therefore the emphasis of the project is on marketing research and appraising how professional expertise may assist in identifying relevant market segments and their special needs. (It is accepted that, in reality, market research cannot be divorced from other marketing processes.)

Subsidiary objectives set for the study include the following:

- definition of the target audience for promotional activities
- methods of communication with the target
- evaluation of strengths and weaknesses of courses
- needs and wants of the target (short and long term)
- data required for marketing input
- methods of collecting this data
- responsibility for data collection and dissemination within the college
- responsibility for marketing

III METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE

i) General

In order to be cost-effective and, at the same time, provide the FEU with the required information, the feasibility study was deliberately kept to a small scale. Five colleges were approached by FEU and invited to participate in the project.

A two-stage approach was adopted:

Stage A

A round-table discussion with Principals and Vice Principals of the five participating colleges, held at the FEU offices on 12 November 1984. This meeting served to develop the brief and provide input for the questionnaire to be used in Stage B. Stage B is the subject of this report.

Stage B

Semi-structured interviews were conducted by executives and directors of HR&H and interviewers experienced in managerial level industrial surveys. Each interview lasted approximately 60 minutes.

ii) Participating Colleges

The following colleges were invited and indicated their willingness to participate in the survey:

Cambridge	-	Cambridge College of Further Education
Cardiff	-	Rumney College of Technology
London	-	Hackney College
Loughborough	-	Loughborough Technical College
Nottingham	-	Basford Hall College of Further Education

These colleges represent a cross-section of British urban life; from areas facing the decline of traditional industries to areas attracting new industries; from the inner-city to the relatively small-town environment.

iii) The Sample

Interviews were conducted with two groups of respondents:

- FE college staff
- Industry

College Staff were put forward by their Principal or Vice Principal, who were asked by HR&H to select a representative cross-section of Heads of Department, Senior Lecturers and Lecturers.

Industry. The participating FE colleges were asked by HR&H to supply details of companies or other organisations within their catchment area which were sending employees to the college for training, or were accepting placements from college-based trainees, or were otherwise involved in joint initiatives with the college. HR&H contacted companies/organisations from these lists on a random basis and interviewed the "person with responsibility for Education and Training".

A target of 60 interviews was set, distributed as follows:

	College-based	Industry-based	Total
Cambridge	6	6	12
Cardiff	6	6	12
London	6	6	12
Loughborough	6	6	12
Nottingham	6	6	12
Total	30	30	60

Full details of the sample achieved can be seen in Appendix B.

iv) Fieldwork

All interviews were conducted at the respondent's place of work. Interviewing took place during December 1984. All interviewers worked in accordance with:

- a briefing
- a printed questionnaire
- written instructions

v) The Questionnaire

Copies of the questionnaires used can be found in Appendix B.

vi) Standards

This project was conducted in accordance with the rules of the Market Research Society of Great Britain. HR&H is a member of the MRS Interviewer Card Scheme (ICS - User Category).

IV THE ANALYSIS

This being a largely semi-structured and qualitative exercise meant that each respondent's answer to a specific question was compared and contrasted with those of the total sample. This method of analysis enables various hypotheses and conclusions to be made, illustrated where appropriate with verbatim comments.

All analysis was carried out by the Executive responsible for the study.

V SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

Colleges

1 The necessity for marketing in FE is generally accepted. Basic marketing concepts are widely understood. Marketing is understood to be an active process.

2 The main marketing activities currently undertaken include:

- Prospectus
- Course information
- Open Days, Open Evenings
- Visits to Schools
- Contact with industry
- Contact with government agencies

Nearly all marketing is currently made possible by the goodwill and enthusiasm of staff, usually in addition to their teaching duties.

3 Current contact with Industry is on four main levels:

- Advisory Committees
- YTS
- Industrial Committees, National Committees
- Personal initiatives

4 Advisory Committees are common in some colleges, rare in others. When used to their full advantage they can be proactive and a valuable force working on behalf of a Department.

5 Contact with schools tends to be via the Careers Teachers. Other Teachers are less accessible. FE is widely held to be in competition with schools, but cooperation is increasing. LINK courses and CPVE will provide further opportunities for contact.

6 Contact with Trades Unions varies widely in extent. Contacts with Union Officials can be beneficial since they regard education as a way forward for their members. Unions can sometimes be persuaded to distribute leaflets to their members.

7 Special provision for ethnic minorities is important in certain cases. Establishing a rapport with community leaders can be helpful for removing suspicion and breaking down barriers.

8 Attitudes towards the Disabled are very favourable and special provision on standard courses is not uncommon.

9 Colleges regard the MSC as being basically sympathetic and constructive (but sometimes confused).

10 Systematic, formal, regular follow-ups of past students are virtually non-existent. Colleges appear rather to rely heavily on ex-students to communicate with them. A few "experimental" instances of surveys using questionnaires to provide information on subsequent employment record and general circumstances were reported.
Systematic follow-up would be valuable for identifying specific course deficiencies, monitoring employment trends, and increasing staff job satisfaction.

11 Formal evaluations of students occur on certain types of course. On other courses students are not formally invited to record their opinions. This is to some extent compensated by the widespread use of staff-student committees. Only one instance was recorded of newly-enrolled students being canvassed on their reasons for enrolling and on how the course first came to their attention.

12 Colleges view personal contact as being more important than literature as a means of promoting or communicating information about a course. Literature on its own is thought to be of limited value but is used effectively in conjunction with personal contact, either to effect an introduction or to act as a reminder.

13 Colleges communicate with pupils coming up to school leaving age by means of:

- Visits to schools
- Careers Conventions
- Open Days
- Literature

Literature can be made available directly, or via Careers Teachers, the Careers Service, Youth Centres or the LEA.

14 College Principals were able to talk productively with School Heads, but their staff are usually only able to communicate with Careers Teachers, or Heads of 5th forms. Antagonism towards colleges leads to a belief that literature destined for a Careers Teacher should be addressed directly to the Careers Teacher, not to his/her superiors.

15 Publicity aimed at the Unemployed can be made available via the Careers Service, Job Centres, Libraries, Drop-in Centres. The Careers Service is thought to be more receptive to training and adult education than Job Centres.

16 The idea of a specific marketing function in colleges was regarded very favourably. The coordination of marketing would result in:

- less duplication of effort
- greater coordination between departments
- easier data collection and dissemination
- implementation of college policy
- promotion of a corporate college image

It was accepted that funding could prove difficult and that most FE staff lack the necessary experience and skills.

Industry

17 The majority of employers interviewed used FE colleges for a proportion of their training. In most cases about three quarters of training was in-house, the remainder college-based.

18 Employers can gain substantially from making use of FE courses:

- colleges can offer experience and skills which an employer cannot provide
- external training releases resources which can be redirected towards production
- lower overheads
- a trained workforce is an investment for the future
- employees learn better in an outside environment
- employees gain a wider understanding of the role of their work
- employees gain confidence and a sense of achievement
- employers can benefit from greater loyalty to the company

19 Employers need to take financial and manpower considerations into account when deciding whether to train in-house or externally. Colleges need to be aware of these considerations and take them into account.

20 Employers interviewed generally regarded YTS favourably.

21 Employers sending employees for training or participating in YTS report that colleges' communications with them were adequate. There was no suggestion that colleges were negligent in facilitating regular access or communication.

22 Employers believe that colleges have much to gain by maintaining a dialogue with them in terms of:

- benefiting from their commercial judgement
- keeping syllabuses up to date
- gaining practical insights into the commercial or industrial world
- increasing their revenue

23 Employers who sat on college Advisory Committees felt they were able to help keep the college up-to-date, and were ensuring an industrial voice in the academic world. They also criticised what they took to be the colleges' lack of commercial awareness.

24 Employers felt strongly that colleges could make their courses more relevant to their needs by visiting the workplaces more often and seeing the work actually being done. This would lead to a greater awareness of a company's needs.

VI RECOMMENDATIONS

1 In the context of a Further Education college there is limited value in viewing "marketing research" or "market research" as an activity separate from "marketing". Research should be an integral part of the marketing process.

Research in the FE context involves:

- the systematic collection of data relating to the needs and wants of various "publics" or targets

- the measurement or assessment of the effectiveness or relevance to the targets of the resulting "services" (courses)

- the measurement or assessment of promotional activities and publicity materials

The main body of this report amply demonstrates that FE colleges are already involved in a wide range of marketing and research activities. However, three principal elements are lacking:

- an overall marketing strategy or policy
- coordination of efforts and activities
- systematic application of formal procedures

These elements could best be achieved by means of the reallocation of resources. We believe this to be vital if the Government's stated aim of "a market-oriented approach" is to be achieved. FE colleges will need to become increasingly marketing oriented, training oriented, and business-minded.

2 We would make the following recommendations for systematic action:

2.1 Establish and maintain a full industry database. This involves the central collection of data relating to the type of industries and businesses contained within the college's catchment area; their current training requirements; their projected future training requirements.

2.2 Establish and maintain an industry file, containing names of companies and key individuals. This will facilitate regular targeting.

2.3 Establish and maintain a student database. Find out where students come from; how they first heard about the course/college; reasons for enrolling. Systematic follow-up of students after leaving the college to establish their subsequent employment record and assessments of their courses.

2.4 Identify the needs and wants of industry and Government agencies by means of: regular dialogue; a programme of developing new contacts; the creation of a favourable climate for discussion. Facilitate internal dissemination of this information.

2.5 Meet the needs of industry (and government agencies) by: encouraging outside involvement in course development; visiting workplaces and placements; being aware of employers' arguments for and against training.

2.6 Develop closer links with schools, where possible: regular contact; regular discussion; regular publicity and promotion. Use LINK courses and CPVE where possible as a basis for wider influence.

2.7 Reexamine the role of Advisory Committees. Given the right conditions a Committee can be proactive and a powerful ally. Select non-teaching members on the basis of their potential influence in the local community as well as their advisory powers.

2.8 Public Relations. Formal supervision of the regular programme of events (Open Days, Careers Conventions, Talks and Visits). Consider the publicity value of case histories.

2.9 Targeting. Regularly updated mailing list for all literature and written communications.

2.10 Corporate Identity. There is always scope for improving the appearance and attractiveness of publicity material. Adopt a uniform style for all publicity materials. Discuss the role of the college at the Community level; the regional or national level; and, if appropriate, the overseas level.

2.11 Coordination and Direction. In working towards a market-oriented approach, the above objectives can best be achieved by:

- appointing a full-time Marketing Professional, to implement policy, represent the interests of the college, and represent the interests of Departments

- appointing (alternatively) a college Marketing Council, with representatively drawn members to have specific functions eg, Coordination, Publicity, Schools Liaison etc.

- allocation of a marketing budget which adequately reflects marketing requirements and obligations.

3. The services of professional market research consultants (and professionals from related disciplines) could be used by FE in furthering several objectives:

- Collection of data relating to needs and wants
- Measurement or assessment of the effectiveness or relevance of courses to their targets
- Measurement or assessment of promotional activities and publicity materials
- Development of an overall marketing strategy or plan.

It is widely accepted that marketing research services in the UK are cheaper and more competitively priced than in almost any other European country; moreover marketing research can be considerably more cost-effective than other marketing services. Further savings could be made in a number of ways:

- by using freelance researchers (freelancers can be cheaper and can often afford to become more involved in a project)
- by using researchers on a consultative rather than an executive basis
- by joint funding (syndication) with neighbouring colleges (or other bodies) on certain types of project.

These are now discussed in greater detail:

3.1 Industry database. Some Marketing Research agencies can offer the services of Information specialists. They can provide a comprehensive database, a time-consuming process involving scanning industrial directories, visiting local Chamber of Commerce offices and other local and national bodies.

Data can be provided on turnover, type of commercial/industrial activity, number of employees, names of key executives.

Local newspapers (and other publications) can be continuously monitored and regular information bulletins supplied which could help a college or other body to keep abreast of developments in industry and commerce.

3.2 Student database. Systematic surveying of past and present students is of vital importance. Due to the relatively small number of students who would be polled about a particular course, surveys are likely to be of a size manageable by the college. Research consultants could play an important part by providing a questionnaire design consultancy and advising on computer analysis.

3.3 Identifying the needs and wants of industry. Surveys could be set up, using the college's database for sampling, to evaluate the present and projected future needs of industry and commerce. Again, Market Research consultants could have an important role to play in questionnaire design.

3.4 Meeting the needs of industry. This is an area where colleges should not require outside assistance. This objective can be achieved by consulting participating employees on a personal level and maintaining a continuous dialogue.

3.5 Developing closer links with schools. This is again an internal activity, with no role for Market Research to play. However, staff development programmes focusing on marketing and communications skills are clearly important and relevant.

3.6 Public Relations. Colleges could consider the value of hiring a freelance Public Relations consultant. We believe that colleges will have very similar Public Relations requirements, so neighbouring colleges could act cooperatively in this area.

3.7 Targeting. See section 3.1 above.

3.8 Corporate Identity. Market Research consultants could be involved in testing the effectiveness (communication, comprehension, impact) of publicity materials. Help could also be given in improving audio-visual or slide presentations.

3.9 Role of college; role of FE. Market research consultants could conduct or give guidance on surveys of the image of and attitudes towards a college in the local community; they could also conduct an image and attitudes survey at national level, looking at public perceptions of FE and its role in the education industry.

Staff Development. Many colleges have a staff development programme. They could consider the value of using freelance Marketing and Training consultants, who could offer the benefits of their experience in marketing, communication and personal skills.

3.11 A company such as HR&H Marketing Research International Ltd can become involved, directly or indirectly, in most of these areas.

Direct involvement could entail:

- questionnaire design consultancy
- assessment of publicity materials
- image and attitude surveys

Indirect involvement could include acting in an advisory or supervisory role in the selection of Public Relations, Marketing or Training consultants.

HR&H Information Services Ltd would be able to help a college establish its database, and could provide regular information bulletins on specific subjects from any publications.

VII COMMENTARY

A The College Perspective

A THE COLLEGE PERSPECTIVE

Respondents were told: "this survey is being conducted on behalf of the FEU as part of a programme of research designed to evaluate how FE colleges may improve the marketing of their services, and determine how colleges may benefit from using market research in the future".

1 Definitions of marketing

Respondents were asked what they understood by the term 'marketing', in the context of a Further Education college.

From their answers it was evident that nearly all respondents had some 'working definition' of marketing. These working definitions varied greatly in terms of accuracy, completeness and understanding. The two elements of the marketing process most commonly mentioned were:

- identification/anticipation of needs and wants
- "selling courses" (to potential students or funders)

For example:

"Meeting and anticipating needs"

"Assessment of needs, selling of courses, monitoring of courses"

"Being aware of local industry. Try to be aware of them and satisfy their needs"

There is a recognition that the college itself and not just the courses must be marketed:

"Making the public aware of what we offer. Educating the public in the role of an FE college"

"The college must build an image that is acceptable to people"

The concept of 'multiple publics' which is of great importance to the marketing of Further Education is only alluded to by one of two respondents, who correctly state that marketing involves potential studentr, employers and government agencies. Most respondents appear to think in terms of marketing activities directed towards one particular 'public', depending on their own department or subject. General Studies departments for instance are more likely to mention sixth formers and Careers Teachers than are Engineering departments, who in turn are more likely to mention their industrial contacts.

Encouragingly, many respondents recognise that marketing is an active process:

"It involves getting into the schools, if possible"

"Going out and talking to parents and potential students"

"It's an active process: ascertaining needs and providing appropriate courses"

It is also encouraging to note that none of the respondents expressed any unease about the role of or necessity for marketing in FE. (In this respect the sample may not necessarily be representative of staff in FE generally.)

2 Current marketing activities

Respondents were asked about the main marketing activities currently undertaken by the college, and about their own personal involvement in these activities.

2.1 Respondents reported a large range of marketing activities. Many of these were common to all the colleges:

- Prospectus
- Course leaflets or brochures
- Open Days or Open Evenings, held at college
- Visits to schools

The Prospectus tends to be the marketing 'mainstay', sent annually to a list of potential employers and industrial contacts, sent also to Head Teachers, Careers Teachers, the Careers Office and other bodies. The Prospectus is also sent out speculatively to enquirers, and distributed at Open Evenings or schools visits to potential students. The Prospectus is frequently described as being out-of-date or staid.

Course leaflets, produced at department rather than college level, tend to be distributed in much the same way as the Prospectus. An advantage is that they can present the department viewpoint and can offer greater detail than the Prospectus. Course or department leaflets are also easier and cheaper to update and reprint.

Open Days or Evenings organised by and held at the college are fairly widespread and elicit a fairly good response from the potential students who attend. Many departments actively seek to encourage invitations from schools to address fourth and fifth formers.

These opportunities when they occur are welcomed since many schools regard FE as being in competition with their own sixth forms.

Several of the colleges have a college display stand or Audio-Visual presentation, which can be taken to schools, exhibitions or Careers Conventions.

Contact with Government agencies and national committees is also recognised as being an important aspect of marketing. Examples include Advisory Committee meetings, Industry seminars, meetings with the Careers Service, the MSC, Job Centres, Social Services, Local Authorities and YTS Managing Agents.

All the colleges use local media, to varying degrees. Most commonly this involves an advertisement in the local newspaper or free press to promote an undersubscribed course, or a college-level advertisement in the weeks before the beginning of the academic year. Less frequently mentioned were local radio advertising or publicity.

2.2 A majority of respondents were Heads of Department. Accordingly most of them said their own role was that of a figurehead or coordinator. Some Department Heads are content to take on all the department's marketing themselves, others insist on or appreciate the involvement of their staff.

"All my staff are actively involved"

"I organise the events and coordinate others in the Department"

"Mainly I coordinate, though I do a lot myself. I expect all my staff to be out and about at one time or another. Most of them would go out anyway even if I didn't prod them"

"I'm a coordinator. Each Section Leader does the donkey work and I approve their material"

The Senior Lecturers and Lecturers interviewed all tended to have a special area of interest or had been delegated a specific responsibility. (In this respect they probably stand out from their colleagues who were not put forward for interview.) One acted as the college Industrial Liaison Officer, visiting companies who expressed an interest in training or placements, and sending literature. Another acted as the college Publicity Officer coordinating advertisements and the use of local media for different departments, and handling a publicity budget.

One instance of a specific marketing function was recorded. A Head of Department had set up and was leading a college "Marketing Team". Other Team members included a representative from each of the Departments in the college. The Team was responsible for the college Display stand and part of its brief was to "develop a corporate image for the college". Its work was designed to complement the initiatives of the individual departments.

One major problem apparent at this stage is that of remission from teaching duties. One respondent interviewed had been granted 3 hours remission per week for his marketing and promotional activities. This was wholly exceptional. A much commoner situation is for an entire Department to share 2 hours remission, to cover not just marketing and related activities but also all other essential non-teaching duties. The single most important limiting factor on marketing appears to be lack of time. It has become an unwillingly accepted norm that staff put in extra hours. The system appears to be running largely on the goodwill and enthusiasm of individuals.

It should be stressed that some colleges are more successful than others in their attempts to negotiate courses with Government agencies, visit schools, attract students and liaise with industry and the local community.

Respondents were asked about the process of setting up and running courses. In the first instance they were asked about contacts with industry.

3 Contact with industry

In particular:

- the steps taken to ensure that courses meet the needs of local employers
- the nature of the contact with local employers, and the importance attached to these contacts
- instances of cooperation or discussion between college and employer which proved particularly succesful or rewarding

3.1 Colleges have contact with local employees at four different levels.

First, the Advisory Committees on which local employees may be asked to sit (Advisory Committees are discussed separately in Section 4).

Second, there is contact with participating employers in YTS schemes in which the college is invloved. YTS is governed by statutory checks, and college and employer are encouraged to communicate with each other, either directly or via an intermediary. Course content and development can be discussed as well as the progress of individual trainees.

Third, contact with employers can be achieved via bodies such as Industrial Training Boards, National Committees for particular trades or industries, and possibly via Examination Boards.

Fourth, individual respondents demonstrated that it was possible to act on one's initiative, foster links with industry and set up successful courses with companies supplying employees for training.

In many cases, contact with industry is not required or appropriate.

General Studies Departments for example act mainly as "feeders" to Higher Education or to other FE college departments and hence have no need to liaise with industry.

3.2 The nature of the contact with industry varies widely. At one extreme are formal meetings such as for Advisory Committees, and meetings with the MSC and employers to discuss the progress of YTS trainees. At the other extreme are a great many informal personal contacts, built up over many years.

Such contacts as one has are regarded as being extremely valuable for survival and expansion, but several points are pertinent:

- many respondents find it difficult to find the time to cultivate their outside contacts:

  "My main problem is finding the time. I need remission for my lecturers to make time for non-teaching activities"

  "We need to be able to change the rules in the college to allow this to happen"

- there is some doubt whether industry cares as much about FE as FE would like it to:

  "Industry doesn't know what we do and doesn't make much effort to find out"

  "It's very important we try and keep industry involved with what's happening. I believe we think this is more important than industry does"

- for some colleges the problem is not lack of communication with industry, but lack of industry to communicate with.

- two respondents in particular demonstrated that those who enjoy a successful career in business or in the public sector before turning to a career in FE can be much more adept than their colleagues at promoting their own department.

3.3 Respondents were able to report a number of successes which had arisen through cooperation between the college and industry. For instance:

- the Brush YTS scheme
- Sports Leadership courses
- Wardens courses for Sheltered Dwellings
- YTS Refrigeration scheme with East Midlands Refrigeration Association
- Fire Training courses
- Merchandising courses

Many of these initiatives were made possible not just because the college liaised with "employers" and identified a need, but because the college encouraged and received the active participation of the "employer".

4 Advisory Committees

Advisory Committees are potentially extremely valuable, and can serve a number of purposes. The extent to which the colleges use Advisory Committees varies. In one college none of the Heads of Department interviewed sat on one, in another all the Heads either had a Committee or were setting one up.

In a few cases, Committees were shared between two departments: this did not appear to be very successful.

There are several factors which influence the perceived effectiveness of an Advisory Committee. The most important factor is to have "the right people" on the Committee. Opinions are divided on this issue:

"We had no problem getting people to sit on it. We went straight to the top companies"

"Selection is improving, but they're only as good as their members"

"It's a good idea but I believe most committees are a waste of time. I can't remember ever having received any useful advice from one. The people with real influence are too busy so we get the middling people"

"The Committee is not always terribly constructive but I still think it is effective. It needs some restructuring and new people"

For those who succeed in attracting the right Committee members and who expect their Committee to work hard for them, the benefits can be considerable:

"They challenge me to look at new ventures and avenues of work. They are supportive of my suggestions. They also keep us in check and make us accountable"

"They're very fierce. We meet and discuss recruitment, evaluate the syllabus and course content, plan publicity, the whole works. Terrifyingly effective!"

Committees which lack a driving force on the other hand can become a burden to the Department:

"I've never noticed anything concrete coming from it"

"They very rarely discuss future needs or the content of courses which they should do. The perspective is too narrow"

Advisory Committees, even if not always proactive, do serve a useful function in that they can act as a sounding board for the Department and can provide greater confidence for decision-making. Their role in marketing a college could potentially be considerable but at present is largely untapped.

5 Other information sources

Respondents were asked about other sources of information (Schools, Trade Unions, Ethnic or local community groups, the MSC, groups for the Disabled) which may or may not be used as input for developing or maintaining courses.

5.1 Schools

Circumstances vary greatly from college to college. Some do manage to maintain contacts with local schools but find it more difficult to discuss course development or content than to actually promote or publicise the college. In most cases there is no need for contact with a view to discussing development or content. Schools and FE colleges are in any case too much in competition for this to be possible.

The exception to the above is in relation to Link courses, where school and college must collaborate on behalf of Link course students. The feeling widely held among FE teachers that schools use Link as a "dumping ground" for low ability pupils, does not help to enhance relations with schools as much as might be desired.

Now that FE colleges are allowed to offer some GCE courses, competition with schools is even more direct.

There is a recognition that CPVE will in the future necessitate closer contact with schools.

In a few instances a college Principal has been able to talk constructively with school Heads, but it is difficult for Department Heads or Lecturers to talk to Schools Heads. For them, the contact is likely to be the Careers Teacher.

Heads of Department wishing to send publicity material to a school know to send it to the Careers Teacher, or Head of the Fifth Form, since material sent to the School Head is likely not to be circulated.

5.2 Trade Unions

A little over half of respondents had no contact with unions, or thought that such contact would not be valuable. But there are a number of functions which a union can usefully serve.

Just over one quarter of respondents said that a union was represented on their Advisory Committee, and their input was regarded as being useful.

Trade Union representatives also have a role to play in monitoring YTS schemes. In one instance it was said that AUEW Shop Stewards had been very cooperative and constructive in setting up a new YTS initiative.

Unions can be useful for distributing college literature, often seeing education as a way forward for their members.

Unions are also sometimes represented on the college Board of Governors.

5.3 Ethnic and local community groups

There appear to be two basic schools of thought, which are neither complementary nor contradictory.

On the one hand, there is a widespread belief that "a student is a student", minorities are not singled out for special attention, and there is no special provision. This belief is held where there is either a well-integrated local community or there is alternative provision locally available.

In other cases, colleges run Access courses, ESL courses, and Adult Literary courses under the Adult Education Initiative. One college reported collaboration with the Community Relations Council.

Experiences of providing special courses had met with different degrees of success. One respondent reported that informal discussions on course content with a local ethnic community leader had been very valuable in removing suspicion and breaking down barriers. Another reported that an attempt to set up a new course had nearly failed because of an insistence that the sexes be taught separately.

One college runs an annual Multicultural Day.

Outreach workers are said to have a role to play in bringing courses to the attention of individuals.

5.4 The Disabled

Most respondents had a very favourable attitude towards education for the disabled, and some reported elements of special provision on standard courses (eg extra hours on an electronic assembly course). There is contact with several groups representing the disabled, and in one case MenCap was represented on an Advisory Committee.

5.5 The MSC

One respondent stated that "we need closer liaison with them, and fewer instructions". But the majority view is that the MSC is "helpful and understanding", "controlling but constructive", or alternatively "confused but sympathetic".

5.6 Other sources

Other potential sources of information for course input which were mentioned include the following:

- Local Government (for data and statistics on employment trends etc)
- National Committees (respondents who sit on such committees are able to learn of future policy as it is being developed)
- Academic Boards (as above)
- Chamber of Commerce
- The Careers Service (a useful source of information, but Careers Officers are thought to change jobs frequently, making it difficult to build up a good relationship)

6 Monitoring student performance

Respondents were asked whether there was any follow-up on the employment record or attitudes of students after leaving the college as a means of evaluating a course, and whether there was any system for recording information on the attitudes of current students towards their courses.

6.1 There were very few instances of systematic follow-up on students after finishing a course, except for YTS courses where the MSC requires and is involved in a 3 or 6 month follow-up. The YTS follow-up is a once only procedure which affords the college only a short-term perspective.

The few instances of systematic follow-up which were reported tended to be described as "experimental" and had not (yet) become established practice. The two main instances reported both involved a short questionnaire with a stamped addressed envelope, one of which is said to have achieved a response rate of over 70%. Both instances were regarded enthusiastically. In a third case students in full-time employment who had been sent for training had been systematically followed up by phoning their employers, but other respondents believed it was not worthwhile to follow up students who had anyway been in employment.

In many other cases various attempts had been made to follow up on students but none of these had been systematic or formalised. These include:

- being informed by an HE establishment when a former FE student had graduated
- relying on former students to visit or write to the department
- holding a departmental reunion.

There are three possible problems associated with following up on students but these must be weighed against the considerable advantages to be gained. The problems are:

- the fact that some courses could benefit more than others from a follow-up
- time and cost considerations
- a reluctance by some Heads of Department to invite possible criticism of their staff.

The advantages are considerable:

- the chance to identify and monitor general trends and patterns of employment
- the chance to identify specific shortcomings of a course, and correct them
- staff job satisfaction could be enhanced as a result of more wide-ranging and less occasional feedback.

"Some students let us know but we don't go out and monitor their success. I would like to see more monitoring. I'd be able to see a pattern then"

"It wouldn't give you the whole answer but it would give you some feedback"

"We try to find our students jobs, even though it's not technically our responsibility, so I do find out what happens"

"We would be able to see if courses were effective, meeting students' needs"

"It's difficult to insist on this. It might help if it was formalised"

"This is a whole untapped market. We had 160 motor engineering students last year. Only 50 got jobs. What happened to the other 110?"

"Yes this would give staff more job-satisfaction"

"We're getting a word processor now, so we may now be able to do it"

6.2 Monitoring of current students and their courses is far more widespread, and far easier since the students are on the spot.

On many types of courses and subjects there is a well-established tradition of student representatives, in the form of staff-student committees and class representatives. It is also not unknown for students to be represented on an Advisory Committee. Students on many types of course have Personal Tutors.

There is also considerable formal evaluation of performance on certain types of course, eg TOPS, ESL courses, YTS schemes, various short courses, and '21 hours' courses. (GCE courses do not appear to fall into this category.) In some cases (eg TOPS, YTS) formal evaluations are obligatory, in other cases not.

A third invaluable system of "data collection" is simple intuition. Staff know from experience that problems can be identified simply by talking and listening.

Once again, the only drawbacks to increased activity in this area are time and cost considerations, conflicting priorities, and fear of criticism of staff.

There is probably some scope for extending student involvement in course evaluation to a wider range of types of course. Such evaluations should not be restricted to courses where there is a statutory requirement.

One case was reported of a course tutor who carried out a survey on newly-enrolled students, to determine where the students came from, their circumstances and how they first heard about the college and the particular course. This type of exercise could be useful in defining the market and evaluating the effectiveness of publicity.

7 Methods of communication

Respondents were asked in some detail about the effectiveness of different means of communicating and promoting courses:

- preferences for personal contact or literature
- advantages and disadvantages of personal contact and literature
- ratings of different methods

7.1 Preferences

Respondents were first asked which they considered to be the more effective means of communicating or promoting courses: literature or personal contact.

	Total
Personal contact	16
Literature	1
Both equally important	13

Only one respondent preferred written to personal communication. The remainder either preferred personal communication or saw both methods as being complementary, with written material helping to achieve an introduction, or being left behind as a reminder. Literature on its own was widely felt to be of limited value.

7.2 Advantages of Personal Contact

The principal advantage of personal contact, whether it be with a potential student or a potential employer, lies in the opportunity to build a relationship with the person. Personal communication was said to be a two-way process which is immediate and direct. One can answer queries on the spot, check the person has understood what has been said, explain better if necessary, and generally use one's personal judgement. One's presence also allows the person to identify the college with a particular face.

Disadvantages of Personal Contact

Only two significant problems can be identified, these being the related problems of cost and time (including time spent away from teaching). Lesser mentioned concerns fell into two categories. First, the people one talks to may not be representative of the target one wishes to reach, the targets may be difficult to reach except via the written word, and one may find oneself "preaching to the converted". Second, the success or otherwise of personal communication rests largely on personality, so one must be able to project oneself well.

7.3 Advantages of literature

The principal advantage of written information is in terms of cost-effectiveness: a large reach can be achieved with a low unit-cost. Second, written information can be sent as a warm-up before the personal contact, or more commonly can be left behind afterwards as a physical reminder. The effectiveness of written information can also, it is said, be enhanced by attention to its physical appearance.

Disadvantages of literature

The main problem with literature, when mailed out or distributed speculatively, is that it can be "a shot in the dark". It is hard to check that the reach is adequate, and response rates may be low, which can have financial implications. Also, one cannot easily be confident that the reading level of the literature is acceptable, that it will be understood.

7.4 Ratings of communication methods

Respondents were read out a number of different methods of communication and asked to give each one a score from 1 to 6 with 6 being the most appropriate and 1 the least. Average scores on a scale from 6 to 1 are shown overleaf:

METHODS Base: All Respondents (30)	Average Score (6-1)
Word of mouth/reputation	5.4
Talks to schools	4.5
Local press advertising	3.9
Displays in schools	3.9
Leaflets distributed in schools	3.7
Prospectuses	3.6
Talks to groups such as the Chamber of Commerce	3.5
Local radio advertising	3.4
Leaflets sent to employees	3.3
Participation in local media debates	3.3
Newsletters for schools	2.4
National press advertising	1.7
Television advertising	1.7

These results demonstrate the importance of attaining and maintaining a good reputation. Local advertising is much to be preferred to national advertising. The primary target may be regarded as the school leaver, rather than the potential employer.

(Due to the small sample size, this table has no statistical validity and should be regarded only as an indication of the relative merits of these forms of communication.)

8 Promotional and publicity targets

Respondents were asked a number of questions regarding the groups to whom promotional and publicity materials and activities were targeted.

8.1 Potential students and potential employers

Respondents were reminded that there are many ways a college can promote itself and its courses and were asked whether they considered the main focus of these promotions should be potential students or potential employers.

	Total
Potential students	14
Potential employers	1
Both equally important	15

Half the respondents believed that both targets or 'publics' are equally important, and complementary. Those saying students were the more important tended to be those for whom the question was not relevant since their departments were 'feeders' for other departments or for HE.

"It depends on the course. The Diploma courses tend to be feeders to Higher Education rather than Industry, for the sponsored courses it's mainly the employers, though the selection is done by the Managing Agents"

"It's horses for courses" (sic)

Respondents were next asked about the methods used for promoting the college and its courses to:

- pupils coming up to school-leaving age
- school teachers
- employers and their employees
- the unemployed

8.2 Pupils coming up to school-leaving age

The most frequently reported activity is the visit to the school. (This was posible in nearly all cases.) There is also a whole range of Careers Conventions (based at the colleges and elsewhere), Open Days and Open Evenings. These are generally thought to be well attended and productive. In some cases, groups of interested fourth and fifth formers can be invited to the college to visit a department. The main contact in the Schools tends to be the Careers Teacher.

A wide range of publicity is also used. Prospectuses and course leaflets can be made available directly or via Careers Teachers, the Careers Service and Youth Centres. Several colleges report that the County Council or LEA sends an education leaflet or Careers Information Pack to all 5th year pupils annually and colleges can be represented in this publicity.

8.3 School Teachers

From the point of view of college staff, the only accessible individual in a school is the Careers Teacher. Serious and productive attempts to cultivate the Careers Teachers are made, although some colleges appear to be more confident and less worried about accusations of "poaching" than others. Careers Teachers are encouraged to visit colleges and one college organises a Careers Teachers Open Day annually.

"We are all in the survival game. They desperately need to keep their sixth forms. I do meet pockets of resistance at schools but mostly they are OK"

"The schools are frightened that they cannot compete with us in terms of resources. In some schools they try to keep students in ignorance of FE"

"All our publicity goes to Careers Teachers, Schools Heads and Heads of 5th and 6th forms, to named individuals. We also invite in all the Careers Teachers. There's not much else we can do, unless pupils are forced to leave school at sixteen"

8.4 Employers

A typical sequence of events would be to send a prospectus and the relevant course leaflets or other information together with a covering letter to a company, and to follow up any response with a personal visit. This approach would be appropriate in an area where sponsored courses are planned or are running.

In many cases however the relationship with an employer is already well-established.

Employers who sit on Advisory Committees can be very influential in persuading their associates to send employees for training.

8.5 The unemployed

The Careers Service is regarded by many respondents as being more likely than Job Centres to accept and distribute literature and give impartial advice on training and adult education. College-based TOPS courses rely mainly on the Careers Service for students. It is also said that Job Centres are naturally more interested in jobs than training.

Several respondents predicted the growth of "21 hour" courses, which enable the unemployed to study without loss of benefits, and believe that these courses need more publicity and promotion, not least to make the courses more appealing and attractive to those who may have become poorly motivated through enforced inactivity.

9 The future role of marketing

Respondents were asked what they thought might be the benefits and drawbacks of a specific marketing job function within colleges, a marketing coordinator.

Almost all respondents were in favour, in principle, of elevating the marketing function in some way, believing the benefits outweighed the disadvantages.

The main benefits to the college were seen to be fourfold:

- avoiding duplication of effort
- greater coordination between departments
- the ability to collect data more readily
- the ability to interpret college policy and promote a public image for the college

The main drawbacks were:

- difficulty in finding a suitably experienced person
- funding
- a preference by some respondents for "fighting their own battles"

"If he was competent and organised I could see nothing but advantages. It would be superb. But I can't think of any existing staff member who could do it"

"I would welcome it. He would have time and could work on a coordinated college approach and a college image as well as a departmental image... But the wrong man might stifle the growth of a department's initiatives"

"It's important to have a college policy, an overall philosophy. I don't have a clue what anyone else is doing"

"The quality of our publicity materials would improve. If he can do the job better than me, fine"

"I would welcome it. We are not professional sellers"

VII COMMENTARY

B The Industry Perspective

(Sections 1-9 are based on 25 interviews with Industrial/Commercial employers. Section 10 is based on 5 interviews with representatives of public bodies and voluntary or charitable organisations)

B THE INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE

Employers were told the survey was being carried out on behalf of the FEU and was designed to assess views on the provision locally of Further Education.

1 Education and Training requirements and in-house training provision

Respondents were asked a number of questions relating to training requirements and in-house provision:

- qualifications, certificates, experience of job applicants
- nature of in-house training provision
- reasons for not using external (ie college-based) training

1.1 Staff from a wide range of companies were interviewed, ranging from engineering to building and from the NHS and armed forces to airlines and department stores. Within this diversity of industries the standards of qualifications and experience required from non-management job applicants varied enormously. In some cases where unskilled or semi-skilled labour was required, no specific criteria were laid down. In other cases various numbers of academic GCE or CSE qualifications were required, or City and Guilds certificates.

However, nearly all respondents stated that personality, aptitude and experience were more important than qualifications.

"No real qualifications required, just reasonable intelligence. A trainee chef must be able to read and write"

"Our policy is only to accept people on a Youth Training Scheme"

"We don't put much importance on qualifications, more on the individual"

"Providing they are reasonably intelligent and they've got their O levels or CSE's we can train them. We are not fussed about the number of O levels"

1.2 Most employers offer on-the-job training, with junior employees being supervised by experienced personnel. In some cases this is all that is required; in other cases on-the-job training is supplemented with apprenticeship training, City and Guilds training, and training provided outside the workplace in FE colleges and other institutions. Examples which demonstrate this range of provision are given below:

"Training is undertaken by a non-specialised trainer in the department and formal courses are run by specialist trainers"

"The Supervisor just supervises. Normally there is a 6 month probation. The training last 2 - 6 months"

"On the shop floor the school leavers are apprenticed and spend some time at college and some time with us. They more or less learn on-the-job"

"Trainee cooks serve a 3 year apprenticeship with day-release at the local college"

"No in-house training at all. A one day instruction course. In the first year they do 24 weeks at college, then go on to do a further C&G qualification"

"We have on-the-job training and also there are various training courses outside and the various County Councils"

"We don't have any in-house training because most of our technicians are of the one-off variety"

"Each boy goes to the Training college one day a week and two nights. And here he works with a tradesman. One day a week for four years with the City & Guilds and a skilled training certificate from the RTITB as well"

1.3 Roughly one fifth of the employers stated that all training was provided internally, employees were not sent out on courses at all. The main reasons for this were:

- cost
- a perceived lack of relevant resouces at the colleges
- a belief that college-based courses are too specialised for their needs.

"We've got the resources to do it here and it's cheaper. We have a large Training Office in London. It's better to arrange it for the whole company than do one-offs at colleges"

"We have to pay to do external training"

These employers tended to believe that there were no circumstances where courses provided by an FE college could be of benefit to the company, or be of more benefit to the employee than existing internal provision.

"Not really because we train our staff to be specialists in (Company's name) procedures"

2 Extent and nature of external training provision

Four fifths of employers stated that there was some degree of external training for employees. In most instances 75-90% of training was provided in-house, the remainder externally. In a very few cases these proportions were reversed with 90-100% of training being provided externally.

A variety of different courses were mentioned:

Nottingham area

Courses attended at four local FE colleges.

Courses include : Advanced course in City & Guilds
: Computer courses
: RSA type 1 or 2
: Technical courses

Cambridge area

Courses attended at three local FE colleges.

Courses include : City & Guilds
: Communication skills
: Public health and hygiene
: Theory of Silver Service and Waiting
: Electronics and Engineering
: Telecommunications
: Retailing and distribution
: Computer studies

London area

Courses attended at eight local FE colleges.

Courses include : City & Guilds
: Health and safety
: Race relations
: Electrical practice
: Woodwork and Upholstery
: Business & Technical Education
: Technician courses
: Painting and decorating

Loughborough area

Courses attended at four local FE colleges.

Courses include : Secretarial
: City & Guilds
: BEC National Certificates
: Motor Vehicle courses
: Hairdressing
: Electronic engineering
: Building Construction
: Child and Community Care

Cardiff area

Courses attended at two local colleges.

Courses include : City & Guilds
: Maintenance and repair of construction plant
: Car maintenance
: Vehicle painting
: Light vehicle mechanics

Employers place considerable emphasis on certification. Most of the courses attended lead to some form of certificate, if not a recognised national qualification.

3 Perceived benefits of college courses

Employers were asked:

- what they saw as the main benefits to the company of sending employees to college
- what, if any, benefits employees gained from external training which they wouldn't derive from in-house training

3.1 There appear to be two principal benefits employers gain from external training.

First, colleges can often provide training and skills which a company needs and cannot offer. External training can also free internal resources for redeployment elsewhere: less time spent on training can mean more time spent on production.

Second, and equally importantly, employees are perceived to become better motivated and more loyal to the company. They gain a wider perspective on the importance and role of their job and develop a better attitude to their work.

"We're not big enough to train ourselves. We'd have to poach other people's apprentices"

"They understand why they are doing things. As they educate themselves they can move up through the company. It encourages people to stay with you. It makes for stability within the company. It also encourages people to join if they know they can increase their education"

"We gain a sense of loyalty to the company"

"It increases the calibre of the employees and this increases their quality of work for the company"

"It gives them further scope and wider knowledge. A background to the job they're doing"

3.2 Employers appear equally quick to recognise the benefits their employees themselves gain from external training. There is a great deal of overlap: the interests of employer and employee do appear to coincide with respect to training. Employees are said to gain confidence, a sense of achievement, an ability to take on new skills more easily.

(It is also recognised that the employees gain a certificate which they can use to advantage when applying for new jobs. This generates a certain ruefulness among employers, but appears to be accepted as the price one has to pay for a better-trained workforce.)

"The chance to work away from the company environment and the chance to meet people from different companies. A course that is non-company-specific is a better investment for their careers"

"They get a qualification that they can use in another job!"

"A greater appreciation of business and the outside world"

"A person can often learn better and assimilate knowledge in an outside environment"

"They're taught a craft which develops their thinking ability and their skill with their hands, and develops opportunities which they can build on"

"They see how the theoretical knowledge helps in the day to day work of the department"

4 Obstacles to external training

All employers were asked about considerations which could affect a decision whether to choose in-house or external training. In particular:

- financial considerations
- manpower considerations

4.1 With respect to financial considerations, there appear to be three schools of thought. These would depend on how vital it is for the company to acquire the skills and training, and on whether they are in a position to offer the training internally.

One school of thought dictates that "training is more important than money": one simply uses the best training that is available becuase the business requires it. A second belief is that "cost-effectiveness is vital": one may be in a position to provide training internally, but the cost-benefit equation will be the deciding factor. The third position is typified by the statement "we have no choice". In this case the company needs but is unable to provide its own training.

"Training is more important than money. We've got to have the skills. If we don't do that we lose our industry"

"We would decide on the quality of the training, rather than the cost"

"This department has a budget to keep to, and we need to be cost-efficient with our training efforts"

"It's obviously cheaper to train them in-house, but as I already explained we feel they benefit from going away"

"We have to work to a budget. If there's enough money to send them to college, we do it, but if there's not enough money we have to wait until the next year"

"In maintaining a cost-effective company one has to be careful with the escalating charges of outside training"

"We don't really have a choice. We either train them or we limit the applications of their knowledge... It saves us time to go outside to the college. It's cheaper training"

"We haven't got a choice really. The Technical College is teaching something different to what we teach"

4.2 In terms of manpower considerations, most employers manage to redeploy staff to cover for those sent outside for training; but some employers have to evaluate very carefully the effects on productivity. Colleges should probably give consideration to the fact that in some cases evening courses are preferable to daytime courses. Also, the short academic year means training cannot be spread evenly in time across the industrial year.

"We manage quite well. It's something we've got used to working with"

"On occasion it has proved difficult eg when the whole company may have 50 to 100 students on a course. But for every manager having a problem there will be 19 not. So generally things run smoothly"

"We stagger and schedule so the work goes through. It doesn't adversely affect our production"

"We calculate our staffing levels on the productivity of everyone"

"This is important. It actually stops us sending people outside"

5 Participation in YTS

Just under three quarters of respondents said their company did participate in Youth Training Schemes.

Most of these employers were fairly satisfied with YTS. One employer felt that his first year in YTS had been 'a waste of time' due to bad organisation and preparation by Managing Agents, but that the second year had shown an improvement.

One employer stated that he felt other companies were using YTS as a source of 'cheap labour'.

Several employers stated that most or all of their employees had started on YTS schemes.

6 Contact and Communication with Colleges

Just under two-thirds of respondents said that they, or their colleagues, had "frequent" personal contact or discussions with or literature from colleges. The remaining one-third had only "occasional" direct contact or literature.

Employers were asked in detail about their contact and communication with colleges:

- the nature or form of the contact
- the perceived purpose of contacts from the college's point of view
- the benefits derived from maintaining contacts with colleges

6.1 The nature of the contact between employer and college ranges from the "virtually non-existent" to "every week".

Contact is mainly informal (except for contact via Advisory Committees on which a number of respondents sat, and for the very large employers where a degree of formality is essential). The most frequently mentioned forms of communication include:

- Informal regular telephone calls to Heads of Department and/or course tutors
- Regular visits to the college to discuss progress of trainees
- Invitations from colleges to Open Days, Careers Conventions and other events
- Advisory Committee meetings
- Visits from course tutors to monitor progress of YTS trainees during placements
- Literature sent by the colleges

There was no suggestion that colleges who were training employees were in any way negligent in their duties to the employer eg facilitating regular access and communication.

6.2 From the employer's point of view, the college has much to gain from maintaining a dialogue, (although it is widely accepted that the relationship is a two-way process having benefits on either side). The colleges are said to benefit from the commercial judgement of an employer; they are able to keep their syllabus up to date; they benefit from feedback in a number of small ways; they gain a practical insight into the commercial or industrial world; and they stand to increase their revenue.

"I think they need our custom. The relationship between us and the colleges is like any good customer/seller relationship; they need to know what we need, so I think our feedback is useful for them"

"They gain our commercial judgement on our future requirements and hence their future intake"

"Their only purpose in contacting me was to find places for two of their lads"

"To get a practical insight into retailing so that the knowledge they are giving out is accurate and up to date"

"I think colleges can benefit from knowing what clients are interested in from the point of view of Further Education. They need to know where the market is"

"I think they're trying to drum up trade when they contact me"

6.3 The main benefit gained by an employer of talking regularly and establishing a relationship with a college is, quite obviously, that the employer is more likely to get the training he requires by doing so. There is widespread recognition that by helping a college in some way one is actually helping oneself too.

"Hopefully we shall get the training that we require"

"It's easy for some employers to be rather scornful of the contribution of Further Education, to doubt the quality of their contributions, so it's useful to find out what their problems are, what pressures they are under"

"Well basically it informs us about the training schemes. You like to be kept informed. We probably wouldn't have taken on any YTS trainees if we hadn't been approached by the college"

"Obviously if you've got someone in front of you whose main interest is his college, you're going to get more benefit from a conversation with him than from browsing through a brochure. I think they should have a course for the understanding of prospectuses"

"It makes them aware of the commercial attitude that companies have and makes them aware that they too have to develop a commercial attitude to young students, not just an academic one. They have to prepare them for industry and commerce"

We ensure that the colleges are meeting the needs of industry and that the industrial voice is heard in the academic world"

"Influencing the provision of courses and education. In industry you tend to use your influence to benefit your own people"

Many of these comments tend to suggest that industry is not always as uninterested in education as some educationalists think.

7 Methods of communication

Employers were read out a number of different methods of communication a college could use to communicate about itself and its courses to Commerce and Industry. They were asked to give each one a score from 1 to 6 with 6 being the most appropriate and 1 the least. Average scores on a scale of 6 to 1 are shown below:

METHODS Base: All Employers (25)	AVERAGE SCORE (6-1)
Direct contact with employers	5.2
Prospectuses	4.3
Word of mouth/reputation	3.9
Leaflets sent to employers	3.6
Talks to groups such as the Chamber of Commerce	3.2
Local press advertising	2.9
Participation in local media debates	2.8
Local radio advertising	2.4
National press advertising	2.0
Television advertising	2.0

Employers clearly prefer direct contact of any kind to advertising of any kind. Direct personal contact is the most important method of communication, but personal letters, prospectuses and leaflets are all rated highly. The reputation of the college within the community is also regarded as being important.

8 Advisory Committees

Roughly one third of employers were represented on a college Advisory Committee. They report a variety of reactions to Advisory Committees, some positive, some not.

Those who were most enthusiastic about Advisory Committees tended to feel that they were able to help keep a Department up to date, and were able from time to time to bring influence to bear on their associates or among local public bodies which would benefit the Department. They also felt that the Committee gave industry a voice in the academic world.

"It has really kept the department in touch with local industry and I have been able to persuade the local authority to fund a brand new Catering Department"

"Very useful, because of the contacts I have in other parts of Cambridge. You can pass on information and get help on different things"

"It's extremely important if you think, as I do, that colleges have to serve the community. It provides a platform for local industry. It also brings you in touch with other local industrialists or commercial people"

Potential problems with Advisory Committees from an employer's point of view include a suspected lack of commitment from other members, and a lack of commercial awareness among the college about which they feel they can do little:

"It can be useful, but at times very frustrating"

"It's quite useful but I would put it no stronger than that. There is a general lack of interest in some of the other members"

"The biggest problem is that they are academically orientated. The college naturally want to run the Committee their way. The commercial viewpoint is lost to the academic because most of them have not had sufficient commercial experience"

9 Improvements

Employers were asked:

- what steps FE colleges could take to improve the relevance and appeal of their courses to Commerce and Industry
- ways in which FE colleges could improve the marketing of their courses to Commerce and Industry

9.1 A number of suggestions for improving the relevance of courses were made, most of these being highly specific requests made by only one person. Only two suggestions were made by more than one employer. The more important of these was a suggestion made by many employers that colleges would be able to make their courses more relevant by visiting companies more often to see the jobs actually being done. This, it is said, would lead to greater awareness of a company's needs.

"One of the most useful and basic steps a Tutor or Head of Department could make would be to visit the premises of his customers in order to see the jobs themselves being done"

"They need to arrange more visits to factories"

"Shaping courses towards what actually happens in commerce rather than just running through the theory"

"More visits to industry by Technical College staff"

The second main request was for greater standardisation of courses between colleges, to result in more nationally-recognised industry qualifications.

9.2 Employers suggestions for improvements to the marketing of courses concentrated entirely on areas in which colleges are already active, which could be interpreted that colleges are involved in many appropriate marketing activities but are not achieving coverage of enough employers.

Suggestions include:

- make more direct contact with employers
- make more use of media to promote their activities
- invite local employers into the college
- make more effort to contact new companies
- become more involved in secondary education
- Open Days for employers, Exhibitions
- Careers Conventions
- Make presentations at local professional institutes

10 Training Organisations

A small number of interviews were carried out with representatives of public or voluntary organisations who were nominated for interview by the colleges in the same way as the industrial and commercial companies. The following were covered:

- Church of England Children's Society
- Careers Service
- MSC Training Centre
- NACRO
- Management and training consultancy company

A resume of these interviews is given below.

Children's Society

Caters for low ability youngsters and provides basic skills training and a jobs search programme. Society works closely with colleges and is involved in YTS. Respondent is able to 'drop in anytime' at colleges. Contact with the college is largely informal and is regarded very highly. Colleges always send new syllabus details. One problem is the relatively short length of the academic year which means a lack of flexibility. Personal contact is regarded as being very much more important than Literature in terms of college promotions. Believes most FE colleges are adapting well to YTS and other changes in role.

Careers Service

This Office deals with two FE colleges and regards placing young people in FE as one of its many functions. Respondent is particularly interested in the handicapped and disabled. Visits colleges to keep up to date and acts as a "clearing-house for information".

Spends part of each week working at the FE colleges with students with special needs. Contact with colleges is very relaxed and informal. One of the colleges "regards me as part of their team". Respondent feels respected and is sought out for advice. Believes colleges are making a big effort in terms of visiting schools, improving prospectuses. Literature is still often out of date. Feels colleges are hampered by insufficient funding. Colleges would benefit from having more contact with neighbouring colleges.

MSC Training Centre

Centre mainly serves the Council of Churches. Respondent is the Director. Has "excellent contacts" with Technical College. Is involved in discussing syllabus each year. Close working relationship. Regards FE as "vital to the effort to train and educate young people". College automatically sends all its literature and leaflets. Would like to see a move away from set courses to a more modular approach.

NACRO

Respondent is YTS Organiser for NACRO. Involved in finding courses and placements for young offenders. College Principals and Department Heads have been extremely helpful, although inevitably problems with trainees occur. Feels free to walk into college staff canteen at any time. College regularly sends literature. Sits on Advisory Committee. Values literature highly as a permanent record or reminder. The short academic year causes problems - youngsters often having to wait months to begin a course. Thinks colleges should have more frequent Open Days since literature often fails to reach the young people who could benefit from training. Thinks there is still room for lecturers to improve their skills in handling difficult trainees.

Management and Training Consultancy company

Involved in YTS and finding work placements. Colleges regularly send literature and prospectus. Colleges do most of the contacting. Attends meetings as well as informal discussions and phone calls. Regards these contacts very highly. Has formerly sat on Advisory Committee, found it ineffective and irrelevant. Feels colleges could benefit by developing a more practical approach to training, by understanding that Further Education and Training are not necessarily the same thing. Thinks college needs greater direct contact with Industry and Commerce to become more market-oriented.

VIII APPENDIX A

Colleges' Reactions

NOTE: Unlike the other parts of this report, Appendix A was prepared by FEU on the basis of the comments received from representatives of the five participating colleges, subsequent to their management having received and studied an earlier draft of the main report.
These are as follows:

BASFORD HALL COLLEGE

Methodology

The aim of this study was to produce findings and recommendations of relevance to managers of FE Colleges. The aim was not to produce research results which would be statistically valid but of no practical utility. Within this context the use of semi-structured interviews was an appropriate methodology.

Main Findings

The main findings are relevant to Basford Hall College. Last September we established a Marketing Group on a College-wide basis. However, the Group is still working towards trying to achieve what the Report terms "the three principal elements" of marketing and research activities:

"- an overall marketing strategy or policy
- co-ordination of efforts and activities
- systematic application of formal procedures"
(p12)

At present the College does some marketing functions well and some badly. We have, for example, Advisory Committees for each area of the College's work. However, we do not have a management policy in operation that would enable such committees to see themselves as, and act as, proactive forces within the College.

Recommendations

Most of the recommendations have relevance for Basford Hall College. Currently the College Executive gives the development of marketing a high priority in policy-making. Like many Colleges, however, our policy-making initiatives have to be developed within the existing budget. We will be reviewing on a systematic basis the findings and recommendations of the Report, and using this review as a means of inmproving our own marketing policies.

Our immediate follow-up to the Report will be to ask the FEU to conduct two presentations of the Findings and Recommendations at the College. This will enable the College management and staff to explore its implications. As a second stage the College Executive and the Marketing Group will then review College Marketing Policy.

CAMBRIDGE COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION

In general we found the comments made in the report useful and this may be evidenced by the fact that we are actively considering allocating College marketing responsibilities to a member of our Senior Management team: in following the necessary terms of reference for this post the report is proving invaluable.

We are, however, struck by the fact that once again colleges of further education are asked to direct resources away from the classroom into other areas of activity. Whilst this may be quite legitimate within the terms of reference laid down, nearly all of the efficiency measures used within FE tend to revolve around money and classroom activities. Once again, the question is raised of how colleges can apply out-dated performance indicators to our new and fast-moving environment. This is not a matter on which individual colleges can exert much direct influence: it is surely a matter to be debated at a national level.

HACKNEY COLLEGE

Hackney College has accepted with enthusiasm a commitment to a market based strategy: it is interesting that the concept has as much relevance to the community and unemployment needs of the inner city as to the more traditional industrial/commercial environment.

An especially useful concept for a complex and large college such as ourselves is that of multiple publics (page 21): it clarifies much of the confusion that abounds in assessing the effectiveness of publicity, since it identifies the issue as one of 'horses for courses'.

Our response is perhaps most helpfully categorised into three areas: those where we have already been active in the areas covered; those we are still working towards; and those where we still need to make decisions and commitment.

1. We have already established -

   a corporate identity and house style
   a willingness to direct funds to this end
   an outreach policy symbolised by our Summer Advice Centre for prospective students

   A programme of public relation events has been established but is being much more developed and formalised now.

2. We are actively working towards:-

   Identifying needs of industry and government in order to meet those needs
   Considering formalised structures to create a favourable climate for discussion

Working much more closely with schools (bearing in mind the political dimensions of the tertiary debate in our area). We know that a college wide co-ordinated approach of a much more professional nature is needed

Developing ways of involving members of the community in course development

We are developing a structured programme of press advertising and publication as an annual campaign.

3. We have not yet taken decisions regarding our need for specific market research or analyses of past and present students. There is a certain feeling that such exercises can be especially demanding of staff time and energies which are not available, and that the conclusions might be easy to predict but difficult to act upon.

Appointing a full-time marketing professional would largely be acceptable to us were funding to be available, but this is unlikely in the present climate. We are building towards the notion of a College Marketing Council but with some hesitation since we feel that the balance of activity needs to swing from the consultative to the executive. We have planned a seminar for College managers using outside consultants (Coombe Lodge).

There are a number of tasks within a college which fall outside the range of skills normally associated with college administrators, academics or support staff. Examples of these tasks are marketing, publicity, public relations, personnel recruitment. Were we to appoint executives to cover each of these tasks they would be somewhat isolated from the mainstream of their profession and have no career structure.

We regard the report as a useful way of taking stock of our position and of raising our own awareness of the need to relate more closely to our clientele.

LOUGHBOROUGH TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Methodology

The selection of the participating colleges appears somewhat arbitrary*. Whilst accepting the basis for selection set out on p3 (inner city, small town, etc) the geographical spread seems restricted. Loughborough and Nottingham are barely 20 miles apart and the students from the two colleges are destined for very much the same type of industrial/commercial employment - in many cases with the same employers. In place of one of these, it would perhaps have been interesting to examine the views and experiences of a college and its surrounding industries from the North of England.

It is also suggested that HR&H might perhaps have obtained more useful information about what is actually going on in colleges if they had been more specific in asking college principals (p4) to select representatives active in marketing/publicity, rather than simply a cross-section of HODs, senior lecturers and lecturers.

Given these reservations, it is felt that the method used produced much useful information - together with some fascinating "throw-away" lines!

Findings

These make interesting, if somewhat predictable, reading and we feel it may be useful to expand upon our College experience of one or two of the areas covered by this section.

---

* FEU wishes to emphasise that HR&H Ltd were not responsible for the selection of the participating colleges.

(a) In addition to regular contact with careers staff at our feeder schools we have, as a result of well-established link (and recently TVEI) courses, built up good relationships between lecturers and school link teachers. These relationships are perceived by both sides as valuable and rewarding.

(b) We have strong links with local community leaders, developed through English Language programmes run by our General Education Department (though, as a College, we certainly take the view that "a student is a student"... p32).

(c) A further strength lies in our special Care courses, which integrate disadvantaged youngsters into normal College life.

(d) Despite only one instance being recorded of newly-enrolled students being canvassed on their reasons for enrolling and on how the course first came to their attention (p8) at least two such studies have been carried out in the Department of Business and Management Studies, and one by the Publicity Committee. Of those from Business Studies, one was carried out by a lecturer in Marketing, and the other as part of a larger study examining the expectations of 100 new students in 5 departments, followed after 6 months by an examination of their perception of the realities of college life.

(e) Paragraph 24 refers to the need for college staff to "visit workplaces more often". No mention is made of the fact that many college lecturers spend part of their vacation, or are seconded for short periods, working in industry or commerce.

Recommendations

Examination of this section provokes the strong reaction that we have a fair understanding of what we should be doing ... if only we had the resources. The "reallocation" of less than 2 hours weekly remission - which seems from the study to be a fairly standard allocation - must be an exercise in futility which is barely to be contemplated!

It is, however, most useful to have set out in professional terms a check-list of objectives to be aimed for. Many of them have, of course, been achieved in the past. But because of the aforementioned restrictions they have rarely, if ever, all been in operation at the same time.

The crucial point seems to us to be the appointment of an effective co-ordinator. We are strongly in agreement with the recommendation that, ideally and for maximum efficiency and cost-effectiveness, a full-time marketing professional should be appointed. Failing this, we tend to the view that one person (rather than the Marketing Council suggested by the study) should be given sufficient resources, remission and backing to co-ordinate those enthusiastic and willing colleagues who will inevitably continue to form the nucleus of any college marketing team.

Possible Further Assistance from Outside Consultants

One area which gives us constant cause for concern is the development and projection of an attractive "corporate image". It would be interesting to know whether advice and assistance could be provided (at a very modest cost) in this particular area.

Other Comments

We are grateful to have had the opportunity to participate in the study and have found it particularly valuable in focusing our attention on current attitudes, problems and suggested solutions.

RUMNEY COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

One fact became very clear from the outset. Everyone saw (and sees) the need for appropriate marketing strategies; that marketing is a major function of a college; that in many respects it is helpful to see the college as a business and that as such, it has to have a marketing team and an overall strategy for selling itself even though it may be competing for the same market, with other sectors of education sharing the same employer.

The difficult question is obviously, how does a college gather accurate information in order to decide what its market is, and how does it match that market to the skills it can provide?

In this, the feasibility study report is very useful. It shows a deep understanding of the FE Sector and the problems and limitations confronting it. It has also offered a refreshingly objective insight into the value of marketing and how FE can make use of appropriate marketing approaches. It stresses the need for colleges to actively sell themselves by accurately identifying the demand for their product and perhaps more importantly, ascertaining if their product fits the requirements of the community they serve. It also gives useful help in making the most of what the existing college system can provide eg maximising the value of Advisory Committees.

Essentially though, the research should be seen as a starting point for colleges to consider their own marketing and public image. It would have been helpful, for instance, to have a more precise idea of the cost of such professional marketing advice. Where its greatest value seems to lie is in helping colleges to look at themselves as a part of an increasingly competitive sector of education and to maximise their existing talents and skills - to take their marketing seriously, if they aren't already.

In this respect it gives a good, concise set of guidelines for a college to evaluate itself more accurately.

At a Board of Studies meeting held on 21 February 1985, the details of the Feasibility Study were described and the main recommendations outlined. The Board was informed that while the 'report amply demonstrates that FE colleges are already involved in a wide range of marketing and research activities.'

There are three principal elements lacking:

- an overall marketing strategy or policy
- coordination of efforts and activities
- systematic application of formal procedures

The Board agreed to the creation of a Marketing Working Group to be composed of the Publicity Officer, the Vice Principal and others, which will report back to the next meeting of the Board with proposals for a marketing policy, strategy, organisation and financial structure.

The Marketing Working Group (of three) has met once, agreed to propose the creation of a Marketing Council and to write its terms of reference which initially will include the recommendations contained in Part VI of the Feasibility Study. It is anticipated that this Marketing Council and its activities will be supported by the FEU RP298 Experimental College Project.

XI APPENDIX B

Sample Details

Questionnaires

SAMPLE Details (1) Colleges

Nottingham	Business Services Engineering
	Business Studies
	Construction
	Construction
	Community Care
	General Studies
Cambridge	Engineering
	Health Studies
	YTS Organiser
	Business Studies
	Catering
	Business Studies
Hackney	Mechanical Engineering
	Technology
	General Education
	General + Community Studies
	Business Studies
Loughborough	Library + Information Sciences
	General Education
	Food, Catering + Hotel Reception
	Mechanical Engineering + Construction
	NTI Coordinator
	Education Officer, NTI
	Business Studies
Cardiff	Engineering
	General Studies
	General Studies
	General Studies
	Computing + Mathematics
	Vocational Preparation

Sample Details (2) Industry

Nottingham	Company Director	Building Contractor
	Development + Training Officer	C of E Children's Society
	Training Officer	Pharmaceuticals
	Financial Director	Light engineering
	Proprietor	Home improvements
	Managing Director	Building services engineers
Cambridge	Catering Manager	NHS Hospital
	Education Specialist	USAF
	General Manager	Hotel
	Personnel Officer	Electronic equipment manufacturer
	Training Officer	British Telecom
	Training Officer	Department Store
Hackney	Managing Director	Electrical installation contractor
	Deputy Manager	Recycling cooperative
	Works Director	Cast iron
	Careers Officer	Careers Service
	Personnel Officer	Electrical collective
	Training Officer	Building contractors
Loughborough	Personnel Officer	Airport administration
	Personnel Officer	Airline
	Director	MSC Training Centre
	Training Officer	Electrical engineering
	Admissions Tutor	University Technology Dept

Cardiff	Engineering Manager	Freight carrier
	Training Officer	NACRO
	Depot Coordinator	Automotive
	Director	Management + Training Consultancy
	Training Officer	Motor vehicles sales + repairs
	Managing Director	Motor repairs + maintenance

HR&H MARKETING RESEARCH
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01-631-1578

SERIAL NO: | | |

JOB NO 1071-1
NOVEMBER 1984

FEU-MARKETING RESEARCH FEASIBILITY STUDY COLLEGE INTERVIEWS

CLASSIFICATION

NAME OF RESPONDENT:

.....

.....

JOB TITLE:

.....

.....

DEPARTMENT:

.....

.....

.....

COLLEGE:

Basford Hall College	1
Cambridge College	2
Hackney College	3
Loughborough Tech	4
Rumney College	5

INTERVIEWER'S SIGNATURE:

.....

DATE OF INTERVIEW:

.....

This is to certify that this is a true record of a market research survey.

INTRODUCTION

This survey is being conducted on behalf of the Further Education Unit as part of a programme of research designed to evaluate how FE colleges may improve the marketing of their services, and determine how colleges may benefit from using market research in the future.

Q.1 First of all, what do you understand by the term 'marketing', in the context of a Further Education college. What activities could marketing encompass?
PROBE FULLY

Q.2 What are the main marketing activities that this college undertakes at the present time?

Q.3 And what activities are you personally involved in, or responsible for?
PROBE: Are you aware of any other activities which are designed to improve the services provided by the college?

Q.4 I want to ask you now about the process of setting up and running courses.
What steps are taken to ensure that courses meet the needs of local employers?

Q.5 What is the nature of the contact with local employers?
PROBE: Is contact formal or informal?
Is contact regular or irregular?

Q.6 How much importance do you attach to these contacts?
PROBE: Why do you say that?

Q.7 Could you describe any instances of discussion and cooperation between the college and local employers which have proved particularly successful or rewarding?
PROBE FOR FULL DESCRIPTION

Q.8 Now I want to ask you about other sources of information which you may as may not use as input for developing or maintaining courses.

a) Is there any contact with schools on the development and content of courses?

YES - 1
NO - 2

IF 'YES'
What form do these discussions take?
How important are these discussions? Why?

ASK ALL
What developments, if any, would you like to see in this area?

Q.8b) Is there any contact with Trade Unions on the development and content of courses?

YES - 1
NO - 2

IF 'YES'
What form do these discussions take?
How important are these discussion? Why?

ASK ALL
What developments, if any would you like to see in this area?

Q.8c) Is there any contact with leaders of Ethnic groups, or other community leaders, on the development and content of courses?

YES - 1
NO - 2

IF 'YES'
What form do these discussions take?
How important are these discussions? Why?

ASK ALL
What developments, if any, would you like to see in this area?

Q.8d) Is there any contact with <u>other bodies</u> on the development and content of courses? These could include bodies such as LEA's, the MSC, local government, or groups for the Disabled?

YES - 1
NO - 2

<u>IF 'YES'</u>
<u>SPECIFY WHICH CATEGORY</u>
What form do these discussions take?
How important are these discussions? Why?

<u>ASK ALL</u>
What developments, if any, would you like to see in this area?

Q.9 Now I want to ask you about Advisory committees.
Does your department make use of Advisory Committees?

YES - 1
No - 2

IF 'YES'
What role does an advisory committee have in the development of courses?

How effective are Advisory Committees in your opinion?

ASK ALL
What developments, if any, would you like to see in this area?

Q.10 Can you think of any other sources of information which are used, or could be used, as input for developing or maintaining courses?
PROBE FOR FULL DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION

Q.11a) Is there any follow-up on the employment record or attitudes of students after they have left the college as a means of evaluating a course?

YES - 1
NO - 2

IF 'YES'
What form does this follow-up take?

How is this information used?

IF 'NO'
Would you regard this as being a valuable exercise?

YES - 1
NO - 2

Why do you say that?

Q.11b) Is there any system for recording information on the attitudes of present students towards their courses?

YES - 1
No - 2

IF 'YES'
How is this information collected and recorded?

How is this information used?

IF 'NO'
Would you regard this as being a valuable exercise?

YES - 1
NO - 2

Why do you say that?

Now I want to move on to a different area: promoting the College and its services.

Q.12 Clearly, there are many ways a college can promote itself and its courses, but who do you consider should be the main <u>focus</u> of these promotions. Should it be ...

the potential students,	1
the potential employers,	2
or are they both equally important	3

<u>ASK ALL</u>
Why do you say that?

Q.13a) What methods are used for promoting the college and its courses to pupils coming up to school leaving age?
PROBE: How effective is this?

b) What else do you think could be done, at reasonable cost?

Q.14a) And what methods are used for promoting the college and its courses to School teachers?
PROBE: How effective is this?

b) What else could be done, at reasonable cost?

Q.15a) And what methods are used for promoting courses to employers and their employees?
PROBE: How effective is this?

b) What else could be done, at reasonable cost?

Q.16a) And what methods are used for promoting courses to the unemployed, or other groups not already mentioned?
PROBE: How effective is this?

b) What else could be done, at reasonable cost?

Q.17 In principle, which do you consider to be the more effective means of communicating and promoting courses - personal contact or literature such as prospectuses or leaflets?

Personal contact	1
Literature	2
Both equally effective	3

Why do you say that?

Q.18a) What are the main advantages of <u>personal contacts</u> in your opinion?

b) And what are the main advantages of <u>literature</u>?

Q.19a) What are the main disadvantages of <u>personal contacts</u>?

b) And what are the main disadvantages of <u>literature</u>?

Q.20 I'm going to read out various methods of communication; bearing in mind the financial constraints under which FE colleges operate, please give each one a score from 1 to 6, with 6 being the most appropriate method and 1 the least.

<u>READ OUT:</u>

Local press advertising _____
National press advertising _____
Local radio advertising _____
Television advertising _____
Word of mouth/reputation _____
Leaflets distributed in schools etc _____
Leaflets sent to employers _____
Prospectuses _____
Talks to schools _____
Displays in schools _____
Participation in local media debates _____
News letters for schools _____
Talks to groups such as the Chamber of Commerce _____

Q.21 Could you describe any promotions, of any type at all, undertaken by the college which proved particularly successful or rewarding?
PROBE FOR FULL DESCRIPTION:

Q.22 Some FE Colleges now have Coordinators who typically have responsibility for a specific function within the college, spanning most or all departments. If a college were to make use of a Marketing Coordinator, this would probably have various effects on the marketing activities of the college.

a) What might be the main benefits of such a system?

b) And what might be the drawbacks?

Q.23 Can you think of any other innovations or changes which might improve the marketing of this college and its courses?

Q.24 Finally, are there any other observations you would like to make, or points you want to emphasise?

CLOSE INTERVIEW. THANK RESPONDENT.

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01-631-1578

SERIAL NO: | | |

JOB NO: 1071-1
NOVEMBER 1984

FEU - MARKETING RESEARCH FEASIBILITY STUDY

EMPLOYER INTERVIEWS

CLASSIFICATION

NAME OF RESPONDENT:

JOB TITLE:

COMPANY NAME:

COMPANY ADDRESS:

PHONE NO:

CATCHMENT AREA:

Nottingham	1
Cambridge	2
Hackney	3
Loughborough	4
Cardiff	5

TYPE OF COMPANY:

NO. OF EMPLOYEES:

INTERVIEWER'S SIGNATURE:

DATE OF INTERVIEW:

This is to certify that this is a true record of a market research survey.

RECRUITMENT

- TELEPHONE COMPANY FROM LISTING
- ASK TO SPEAK TO NAMED INDIVIDUAL
- IF NO INDIVIDUAL NAMED, ASK SWITCHBOARD FOR THE NAME OF THE:
  - * Managing Director
  - or * Proprietor
  - or * Marketing Director
  - or * Production Manager
- ASK TO BE PUT THROUGH TO THAT PERSON

INTRODUCTION

Good morning/afternoon. I'm ..... from HR&H Marketing Research Limited. We have been commissioned by the Department of Education to carry out a survey on further education in Commerce and Industry. The name of your company was one of several passed on to us by a local College of Further Education and I would like to make an appointment to interview you on this subject, which would take up about 45 minutes of your time.

- ARRANGE APPOINTMENT FOR INTERVIEW
- REASSURE ABOUT CONFIDENTIALITY

INTRODUCTION

As I explained to you on the phone we are carrying out this survey on behalf of the Further Education Unit. We want to talk to people like yourself to get your views on the provision of Further Education for employees and school leavers locally.

Q1 First of all please could you tell me what qualifications, certificates or experience the company typically expects from a job applicant or trainee. (I'm interested mainly in applicants for non-management positions.)

PROBE FOR DETAILED RESPONSE

IDENTIFY DIFFERENT REQUIREMENTS FOR DIFFERENT POSITIONS

Q2 Please could you describe the in-house training provided by the company for new employees, or for employees moving to different positions within the company who need new skills or knowledge.

PROBE FOR DETAILED RESPONSE

PROBE: Is there any other in-house training?

Q3a) Is <u>all</u> training and education provided internally, or are employees sometimes sent on courses as well?

All training internal - 1 - ASK b&c&d

Training both internal and external - 2 - GO TO Q4

b) Why is that?

c) Do you see any circumstances where courses provided by a college such as a Further Education college might be of benefit to the company?

d) Do you see any circumstances where a college course on a work-related subject might be of more benefit to an employer than similar training provided by the company?

<u>GO TO Q8</u>

Q4 Roughly what proportion of training (or education) is internal, and what proportion external?

Internal _____

External _____

Q5 Please would you describe the nature and content of college courses on which employees are sent.
(IF MORE THAN ONE COURSE, ASK ABOUT EACH IN TURN - MAIN ONE FIRST)

PROBE: Name of college
Length of course
Frequency of attendance
Skills/training provided

Q6 What do you see as being the main benefits to the company of sending employees to a college to attend courses?
PROBE: What else?

Q7a) Are there any benefits which the employees derive from work-related courses at a college which they wouldn't derive from in-house training?
PROBE: Any other benefits?

ASK ALL

Q8 How important are financial considerations when deciding whether to use in-house or external training?
PROBE FOR REASONS

Q9 And how important are manpower considerations. By that I mean ensuring sufficient cover for the day-to-day work of the company?
PROBE FOR REASONS

Q10a) Does the company participate in government sponsored Youth Training (YTS) Schemes?

YES - 1
NO - 2

IF 'YES': PROBE FOR DESCRIPTION OF SCHEME AND EVALUATION.

Now I would like to ask you about the contact or discussions you, or other senior personnel within the company, may have had with colleges such as Further Education colleges.

Q11a) First, have you or any of your colleagues ever had any personal contact with or discussions with or literature from colleges?

Yes (frequently) - 1) GO TO
Yes (occasionally) - 2) Q12
No (never) - 3 - ASK b

b) What benefits, if any, would you derive from contacts such as these?

GO TO Q15

Q12 What is the nature of the contact with the college?
PROBE: Is contact formal or informal?
Is contact regular or irregular?
What is the position/job title of the contact(s) at the college?

Q13 What do you see as being the purpose of these contacts, from the college's point of view?
PROBE: What does the college gain from talking to people in Commerce and Industry?

Q14 And from your point of view what benefits, if any, are there in talking to colleges?

ASK ALL

Q15a) Do you, or any of your colleagues, sit on an Advisory Committee for Further Education? (IF NECESSARY: These are committees which comprise Heads of Department in colleges, representatives of Commerce and Industry and other interested parties and which seek to guide the development of new courses.)

YES - 1 - ASK b
NO - 2 - GO TO Q16

b) How useful do you think this Committee's work is?
PROBE: Why do you say that?

ASK ALL

Q16 In your opinion, what steps could colleges of Further Education usefully take to improve the relevance and appeal of their courses to Commerce and Industry?
PROBE: What developments, if any, would you like to see in this area?

Q17 I'm going to read out various methods that a college of Further Education could use to communicate about itself and its courses to Commerce and Industry. Bearing in mind the financial constraints under which these colleges operate, please give each one a score from 1 to 6, with 6 being the most appropriate and 1 the least.
READ OUT:

Local press advertising	_____
National press advertising	_____
Local radio advertising	_____
Television advertising	_____
Word of mouth/reputation	_____
Leaflets sent to employees	_____
Prospectuses	_____
Talks to groups such as the Chamber of Commerce	_____
Direct contact with employers	_____
Participation in local media debates	_____

Q18 Can you think of any other ways in which colleges of Further Education could improve the marketing of their courses to Commerce and Industry?

Q19 Finally, are there any other observations you would like to make, or points you want to emphasise?

CLOSE INTERVIEW - THANK RESPONDENT

HR&H MARKETING RESEARCH
INTERNATIONAL LIMITED
74 NEWMAN STREET
LONDON W1P 3LA

01-631-1578

SERIAL NO: | | |

JOB NO: 1071-1
NOVEMBER 1984

FEU - MARKETING RESEARCH FEASIBILITY STUDY EMPLOYER INTERVIEWS

CLASSIFICATION

NAME OF RESPONDENT:

JOB TITLE:

NAME OF ORGANISATION:

ADDRESS OF ORGANISATION:

PHONE NO:

CATCHMENT AREA:

Nottingham	1
Cambridge	2
Hackney	3
Loughborough	4
Cardiff	5

TYPE OF ORGANISATION:

INTERVIEWER'S SIGNATURE:

DATE OF INTERVIEW:

This is to certify that this is a true record of a market research survey.

RECRUITMENT

- TELEPHONE ORGANISATION FROM LISTING
- ASK TO SPEAK TO NAMED INDIVIDUAL
- IF NO INDIVIDUAL NAMED, ASK SWITCHBOARD FOR THE NAME OF THE:
  * Person with responsibility for Educational and Training issues.
- ASK TO BE PUT THROUGH TO THAT PERSON

INTRODUCTION

Good morning/afternoon. I'm ..... from HR&H Marketing Research Limited. We have been commissioned by the Department of Education to carry out a survey on the provision of further education. The name of your organisation was one of several passed on to us by a local College of Further Education and I would like to make an appointment to interview you on this subject, which would take up about 45 minutes of your time.

- ARRANGE APPOINTMENT FOR INTERVIEW
- REASSURE ABOUT CONFIDENTIALITY

HR&H MARKETING RESEARCH
INTERNATIONAL LIMITED
74 NEWMAN STREET
LONDON W1P 3LA
01-631 1578

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Topic Guide for "Community Groups" interviews

Follow Topic Guide as far as possible. Record respondent's answers on the questionnaire blank. (Use section numbers below to identify main responses.)

INTRODUCTION

As I explained to you on the phone we are carrying out this survey on behalf of the Further Education Unit. We want to talk to people like yourself to get your views on the provision of Further Education locally, and the attempts FE colleges make to canvas your opinions and inform you about their courses.

1. What is the function of your organisation/group/association?

2. What is your function within the organisation, especially as it relates to education and training?

3. What activities are undertaken to this (above) end?

Relations with colleges

4. Spontaneous description of nature of contact with FE college.

5. Who initiates contact and communication (respondent or the college)?

6. What form does contact with the college take? (Formal/Informal? Regular/Irregular?)

7. How much importance is attached to these contacts? Why?

8. Probe for instances of discussion and/or cooperation which have proved particularly successful or rewarding. (In what way were they successful/rewarding?)

9. Has respondent (or colleagues) been involved in an Advisory Committee at an FE college, or other educational establishment? How useful was this? How effective?

10. Any developments respondent would like to see in the broad area of contact and relations with colleges?

Communications

11. What methods does the FE college use to promote itself and its services (ie courses)?

12. Does respondent prefer personal contact, literature, or both? Why?

13. Advantages and disadvantages of personal contact/ literature (ie leaflets, brochures)/other methods?

14. What changes could FE colleges make to improve the appeal of their courses (to potential students/to respondent)?

15. What changes could FE colleges make to improve the promotion or communication of their courses (as above)?

16. Any other points?

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Questionnaire blank for unstructured interviews.
(Attach to Recruitment Sheet on completion)

Board of management

Chairman
J G Owen CBE, Chief Education Officer, Devon

Members
J C N Baillie, National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education
J W Ballard, Association of Principals of Colleges
Association of Colleges of Further and Higher Education
J Deboo OBE, Confederation of British Industry
R J Hartles CBE, Association of Metropolitan Authorites
R Jackson, Trades Union Congress
T P Melia HMI, Department of Education and Science
J Morris, Association of County Councils
L Rees, Welsh Joint Education Committee
Rev Canon George Tolley, Manpower Services Commission
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K McWilliams, School Curriculum Development Committee
P C Webb HMI, Welsh Office Education Department

Secretary
Jack Mansell, Chief Officer, Further Education Unit

Objectives

The objects for which **The Further Education Unit (FEU)** is established are to promote, encourage and develop the efficient provision of further education in the United Kingdom and for that purpose:
a) to review and evaluate the range of existing further education curricula and programmes and to identify overlap, duplication, deficiencies and inconsistencies therein;
b) to determine priorities for action to improve the provision of further education and to make recommendations as to how such improvements can be effected;
c) to carry out studies in further education and to support investigations of and experimentation in, and the development of further education curricula and to contribute to and assist in the evaluation of initiatives in further education;
d) to disseminate and publish information and to assist in the dissemination and publication of information about recommendations for and experiments and developments in further education.

A limited number of extra copies of this report are available from

Publications Despatch Centre,
Department of Education and Science,
Honeypot Lane, Canons Park,
Stanmore, Middlesex HA7 1AZ.